

VZCZCXYZ0000
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHVB #0793/01 3230801
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 180801Z NOV 08
FM AMEMBASSY ZAGREB
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8782

UNCLAS ZAGREB 000793

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR EUR/PGI, G/TIP, G-ACBlank

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KTIP](#) [PGOVKCRM](#) [KWMN](#) [PREL](#) [SMIG](#) [HR](#)
SUBJECT: CROATIA TIP INTERIM ASSESSMENT

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: The Croatian government has continued to actively address the issue of trafficking in persons during 2008. The government has worked aggressively to increase public awareness and to train government employees, public officials, and NGOs in identification and prevention. The government has also begun work on amendments to Croatian law to better protect the rights of victims and enable harsher sentencing for convicted traffickers. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) In mid-2008, the GOC completed a four year EU Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development, and Stabilization (CARDS) program entitled "Combating Trafficking in Human Beings". The 1 million Euro program co-funded by the Croatian government provided education on trafficking in persons to 314 people, including social workers, health care workers, police officials and government lawyers.

¶3. U) Based on conclusions from the CARDS project, the GoC's Office for Human Rights sent a list of recommendations to a Ministry of Justice working group tasked with proposing amendments to the Criminal Code and Criminal procedure acts in regards to Trafficking in Persons. One of the amendments introduces a new mandatory sentencing of no less than five years if the trafficking offence was committed by an official in the performance of his duties or if the trafficker deliberately or through gross negligence endangered the life of the victim. Other amendments would limit the number of interviews a TIP victim would have to endure in order to prevent re-victimization. The amendments are currently awaiting approval in parliament.

4.(U) In preparation for June's Euro Cup soccer championship the GOC produced and aired a nation wide television campaign warning Croatian fans of the increased risk of trafficking of men, women, and children at these events, especially in the area of prostitution and forced labor. The advertising campaign featured one of Croatia's most revered and famous sports stars urging Croatians to be aware and report trafficking. The campaign was aired throughout the day but was also shown after the nightly state news program, the most watched television program in Croatia.

¶5. (U) In June a cooperation agreement was signed between the Ministry of the Interior (MOI), the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, and two NGOs in order to clearly define the responsibilities of each signatory in regards to victim assistance. The agreement allows NGOs to provide primary assistance to the victim, places the responsibility of safe return to the country of origin with the MOI, and allows the Ministry of Health to be present during interviews of child victims and to provide child victims with a legal guardian.

¶6. (U) In October, the Croatian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and European Integration and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) organized a one day conference entitled "The Role of Diplomatic Personnel in Combating Trafficking in Human Beings." The results of a joint capacity building project between IOM and the ministry were presented at the conference. The project, a key element of which was improving potential victim identification procedures, trained 17 diplomatic and consular staff who further

trained 60 colleagues on issues related to trafficking in persons. Additionally, the project produced information brochures in 5 different languages designed to help assist foreigners, visa seekers, Croatian travelers and potential TIP victims. The project also produced a handbook and curriculum for Croatia's Diplomatic Academy for further education on TIP issues. As a result of the conference, consular officers at the Croatian Embassy in Rome have already produced a report which examines trends in Croatian visa applications from Italy and identifies key indicators that can be used to identify possible TIP victims.

¶17. (U) The conference was followed by an outdoor information fair held in the heart of Zagreb on Saturday, October 18, to mark EU Anti-Trafficking Day. Organized by the Government's Human Rights Office and related NGOs, the event aimed to raise public awareness about the threat of TIP. In addition to information booths and informative leaflets there were also music and dance performances.

¶18. (U) In October the Office for Human Rights organized two seminars on "How to Recognize the Victims of Trafficking in Persons". The first seminar was organized with the cooperation of an NGO from the Dalmatian coastal town of Sibenik and trained 30 family center workers. There are ten family centers in Croatia established at a county level by the Ministry of Family that work with local families and youth in areas of therapy and prevention. Workers at these centers include social workers, lawyers, and psychiatrists. The second seminar was organized with the Ministry of Tourism and trained 40 employees in the tourism sector on ways to identify trafficking victims.

9.(U) In 2008 the government's Office for Human Rights provided 287,000 kuna (USD 57,400) to fund eight projects aimed at suppressing TIP with NGOs throughout Croatia. The projects included programs aimed at educating the judiciary about trafficking in persons, increasing cooperation between NGOs and local authorities, youth education and prevention, and media awareness.

¶10. (U) In September the GOC presented at an OSCE organized seminar for national anti-trafficking rapporteurs from participant states in the Alliance Against Trafficking in Persons. The Croatian government was invited to present their system of reporting as an example of comprehensive coverage and good practice for the countries of the region. The goal of the seminar was to support and encourage participating states in the implementation of commitments to fight TIP, while providing a venue for exchanging information, enhancing dialogue, and networking among national authorities working in the TIP area.

¶11. (U) In September, the GOC also participated in an OSCE organized conference on identifying ways to successfully prosecute cases of human trafficking. Realizing that prosecution and subsequent sentences for human trafficking remain low in all 56 OSCE participating states, the conference's aim was to enhance national capacities and to provide an opportunity for states to exchange experiences, share best practices, and identify ways to successfully prosecute cases of all forms of human trafficking.

¶12. (U) The government reported that five trafficking victims have been identified this year to date. Three of the victims were male and all were trafficked with the intent of forced labor. The government also reported four final trafficking convictions in which the defendants were sentenced from terms ranging from one year to 20 months.

BRADTKE